

RLi 2/14/2004

METHODS FOR ENHANCING IMMUNE RESPONSES BY FIBROBLAST GROWTH FACTOR RECEPTOR 5 POLYPEPTIDES

Express Mail Label No. EK798074335US

~~COMPOSITIONS ISOLATED FROM STROMAL CELLS AND METHODS FOR THEIR USE~~

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Technical Field of the Invention

This invention relates to polynucleotides and polypeptides derived from lymph node stromal cells from flaky skin (*fsn* $-/-$) mice and their use in therapeutic methods.

10 Background of the Invention

Lymph vessels and nodes are important components of the body's immune system. Lymph nodes are small lymphatic organs that are located in the path of lymph vessels. Large molecules and cells, including foreign substances, enter into the lymphatic vessels and, in circulating through these vessels, pass through the lymph nodes. Here, any foreign substances are concentrated and exposed to lymphocytes. This triggers a cascade of events that constitute an immune response, protecting the body from infection and from cancer.

Lymph nodes are surrounded by a dense connective tissue network that forms a supporting capsule. This network extends into the body of the lymph node, forming an additional framework of support. Throughout the remainder of the organ, a fine meshwork can be identified that comprises reticular fibres and the reticular cells that produce and surround the fibres. These features provide a support for the main functional cells of the lymphatic system, which are T- and B-lymphocytes. Additional cell types found in lymph nodes include macrophages, follicular dendritic cells, and endothelial cells that line the blood vessels servicing the node.

The cells within lymph nodes communicate with each other in order to defend the body against foreign substances. When a foreign substance, or antigen, is present, it is detected by macrophages and follicular dendritic cells that take up and process the antigen, and display parts of it on their cell surface. These cell surface antigens are then presented to T- and B-lymphocytes, causing them to proliferate and differentiate into